Single Mother Role in the Success of their Children (*Phenomenological Study of Single Women in Makassar City*)

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Abstract

Purpose – The study is aimed to identify the openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality between mother and child as the key factors for successful children. If the parents are not able to give attention and love to their children, it will form feelings of insecurity and hatred towards themselves and to their surroundings. Similarly, if the parents are not able to create discipline in education, the probability of unclear future for their child will increase. A single mother has to endure a lot of problems and face the biggest challenge in their life; to be a single parent who must be able to hold multiple roles, that is as a father who works for a family living and as a mother who nurtures and educate her children. As a mother, she is required to be able to manage everything by herself; some of them include financial management, jobs, and nurture time for her children.

Methodology – employed in this study was in-depth interview to observe inhibiting factors that experienced by single parents in parenting pattern that they apply in nurturing their children.

Finding – Result showed that frequency and intensity play important role in creating openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality as well as automatically able to form inclusion, control, and affection between mother and children. The expected final result is the discovery of an ideal way of single parent role for their children.

Implications – the research results showed that frequent communication behavior and sufficient intensity are used to give children more confident in their activities at home or school environment and by which, the children will be able to reach success in their life.

Value originality – the research is the existence of communication pattern formed by single mother family and her children.

Keywords a single mother, success children, family communication

1. Introduction

Although the family is the basic unit of society, it occupies the primary and fundamental level. Thus, family plays an important role in the formation of a child personality or, in other words, it produces significant influences in the child life. If the parents are not able to give attention and love to their children, it will form feelings of insecurity and hatred towards themselves and to their surroundings. Similarly, if the parents are not able to create discipline in education, the probability of unclear future for their child will increase.

The roles and duties of parents regarding their children must not be separated from the way they communicate with each other. Further, we need to realize the fact that no human beings in this world are born with skills of communication. Some frequent errors may include interrupting each other, arguments, blaming, attacking other's personalities, creating feelings of guilt on another person, rush, expressed unclear and unrealistic desires. In addition, it often leads to conflicts between family members.

Makassar is a metropolitan city with a large population. Based on data obtained from the Religious Courts Class 1-A of Makassar City, divorce cases filed from 2010 to 2014 were 8,911 cases; 6,148 cases were lawsuits filed by the wife to their husband.

When a single parent is a matter of choice, it is usually well prepared and, thus, will not become a heavy burden. Good preparation is often allocated to mental and economic aspects. Solutions provided may include a meeting of household needs, methods to overcome loneliness and even the requirements to be a mother and, also, a father to the children. Yet, a contrary condition will be the case when a single parent is a necessity situation.

The single mother has to endure a lot of problems and face the biggest challenge in their life; to be a single parent who must be able to hold multiple roles, that is as a father who works for a family living and as a mother who nurtures and educate the children. As a single parent, she is required to be able to manage everything by herself. Some of them include financial management, jobs, and nurture time for her children.

2. Objective

The study aims to analyze the openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality between mother and child.

3. Method

A qualitative method with phenomenological approach will be employed in the research. Qualitative method is a process of research and understanding that based on a methodology that investigates the social phenomenon and human problems. In this method, the researchers create complex descriptions, investigate words, construct detail reports of the views of respondents, and conduct studies on the natural situations (Creswell, 1998).

Location for a phenomenology research can be centered in one place, or disperse places, with consideration to individuals that will be used as the informants; either one or more individuals who are considered eligible to provide good information. Research is planned to take place in Makassar city and focusing on single parents and employing five individuals as the informants. The informants are single mothers with children, have been living their life as single mothers since their children were little or at school age, and have not engaged in marriage status. Research will be carried out in, at least, six months.

The study discusses single mother family communication and, thus, it requires the subjects of research (informants) to be those that are able to provide reliable or related information to its research. Informants that selected as the data source is a mother in a single parent family who lives in Makassar city, with the following criteria: (1) a maximum 50 years old single mother, (2) single mother with children, (3) has been a single parent since her children were still young or at school-age and not married anymore. Research object is the successful children of the single mother. The 'successful children" in this research refer to those children who have an undergraduate title and/or work.

4. Analysis and discussion

Research on the role of a single parent regarding their child's success is a study with profound observations. In this study, researchers refer to literatures which contains results that have relevance information needed for the research, including the thesis written by VeronikaPratjipto, *Factors Influencing Parenting of Single Parent Mother*, which employing paper-making techniques of data through in-depth interviews, noted important factors which affects single mother parenting that were divided into two main factors, namely internal factors which consist of educational level, economic status, and background of parenting and external factors which consist of social and physical environment and culture.

Several studies related to communication of single-parent mothers and their According to (Hurlock, 1999) single parents refer to the parents who have been a widower or widow, either a father or mother, assumes responsibility for the maintenance of their children after the death of their spouse, divorce, or births outside of marriage. Then, Sager et al (in Duval & Miller, 1995) state that single parents are parents who raise their children alone without the presence of support and responsibility of spouses. In line with the opinion of (Sager et al, Perlmutter and Hall, 1985) states that single parent is parents without a partner who continues who raise their children.

Communication between single parents and their children is reflected in the management of privacy. Privacy management in communications (communication privacy management theory) developed by Sandra Petronio focuses on the management between the desire to openness/possession of openness or be closed (privacy), between making themselves as part of the public (being public) or private (being private). According to (Petronio, 2013), individuals involved in a relationship with other individuals will constantly manage the border lines or the boundary in them which is between the public and the private spheres; between feelings and thoughts that they want to share with others and those that they want to keep for themselves.

Single parents and children use communication to manage the opposite potentials that may damage their relationship. Dialogue is a way to better understanding of fluctuations in their relationship. According to (Baxter, 2013), relationships basically have dynamic natures, and communication is an attempt on how people manage their similarities and differences. In fact, communication leads toward similarities, yet it also creates, maintains, and manages differences. The notion of relationship is multidimensional, and a number of perspectives are needed to understand them completely.

A similar opinion was found in (DeVito, 1997), where he noted that the success of an information is determined by the nature and quality of the relationship between the individuals concerned and contains five general considerations, namely: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positivity, and equality.

Shannon and Weaver (Cangara, 2007) argued that communication is a form of human interaction interplay that affects each other, intentionally or unintentionally. This is not limited to the forms of communication using verbal language as it also applied to terms of facial expressions, painting, art, and technology.

In the above definition, it is clear that human communication can only occur if there is someone who conveys a message to others for specific purposes. This means that communication can only happen when supported by the source of the message (the communicator), the message (message), media (channel), and receiver (communicant). The five elements are then referred to the elements of communication.

Interpersonal communication is the basic unit of communication. Interpersonal communication event includes almost all informal communication and pleasantries, everyday conversations conducted during the morning wake up to go back to bed. Most of the interpersonal communications take place face to face. Whenever done face to face, there will be personal contact between communicators with the communicants. In this case, when communicators convey a message, the feedback is instant. The communicator is able to determine the response of his communicant in real time.

Interpersonal communication is also a communication that includes the closest human relationships, i.e. communication between two people who love each other. Bochner (L.Tubbs and Moss, 2000) states that interpersonal relationship relates to the process of establishing individual relationships – closer, deep, personal and intimate bonds. The benefits of communication are clear and real.

Dyadic nature of interpersonal communication involves thinking, feelings, opinions, and expectations and action-reaction. If a communicator is already quite familiar with the sociological and psychological state of the communicant then he can adjust the messages according to the needs of the communicants and, therefore, interpersonal communication always leads to interplay on both sides.

In his book, (DeVito, 1997) states that successfully conveying information is determined by the nature and quality of the relationship between the individuals concerned and contains the following five general elements:
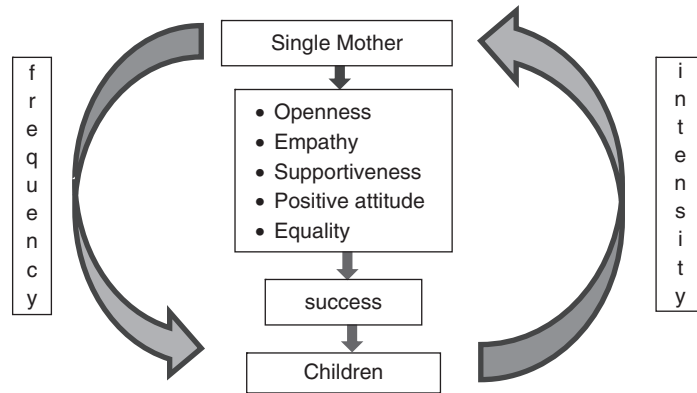
(1) *Openness*. The quality of disclosure refers to at least three aspects of interpersonal communication. First, effective interpersonal communicators should be open to the person whom they interact. This does not mean that people should immediately open all of their life history. This indeed may be exciting, but it usually does not help communication. Instead, there must be a self-willingness to open the information that is usually hidden, whenever the disclosure is worth regarded. The second aspect refers to the willingness of communicators to honestly react to incoming stimulus. People who are silent, non critical, and no response, is generally a tedious conversation participants. We want people to react openly to what we say. And we have a right to expect this. Ignorance is amongst the worst things and disagreement even much more enjoyable. We demonstrate openness in the way that it reacts spontaneously to others. The third aspect concerns the "ownership" of feelings and thoughts. Being open in this sense is to recognize that feelings and thoughts that we are communicating are indeed ours and we are responsible for it. The best way to express this responsibility is the message that using the word I (first person singular)

(2) *Empathy*. Henry Backrack defines empathy as "a person's ability to "know" what is being experienced by others at a certain moment, from the perspective of the other person, seeing through the eyes of that other people." On the other hand, sympathize refers to feel for others or feeling sorry for the related sadness. Empathy is positioning us in the same position as those affected; we are in the same boat and experience the same emotions in a similar way. Empathetic people are able to understand the motivation and experiences of others, their feelings, and attitudes, as well as their hopes and desires for the future. Empathy can be communicated both verbally and non-verbally. By non-verbally, we can communicate empathy by showing (1) active engagement with it through facial expressions and appropriate gestures, (2) centralized concentration including eyes contact, attentive posture, and physical proximity, and (3) appropriate touch or caress.

(3) *Supportiveness*. The effective interpersonal relationship is a relationship where there is a supportive attitude. Open and empathetic communication cannot take place in an atmosphere that contains no supportive aspects. Supportiveness can be shown by being (1) descriptive, not evaluative, (2) spontaneous and not strategic, and (3) provisional and not overconfident.

(4) *Positivity*. We communicate a positive attitude in interpersonal communication by at least two ways: (1) express a positive attitude and (2) positively encourage people who become our interaction partners. Positive attitude covers at least two aspects of interpersonal communication. Firstly, interpersonal communication is constructed when a person has a positive attitude towards themselves. Secondly, positive feelings for the communication situation are, in general, very important for effective interaction. There is no fun to communicate with people who do not enjoy the interaction or does not react favorably to the situation or interactions atmosphere.

(5) *Equality*. Inequality may occur in many situations. One side may be cleverer, richer, more handsome or beautiful, or more athletic than others. There are no two individuals who are truly equal in all aspects. Apart from this inequality, interpersonal communication is more effective if the atmosphere is similar. That is, there must be a tacit acknowledgment that both parties are equally valuable and precious, and each party has something important to contribute.

The need to organize and maintain satisfactory interpersonal communication with others is in connection with love and affection. Affection always shows the relationship between two people or parties. Affective behavior is behavior that is intended to fulfill interpersonal needs for affection. Affective behavior indicates that there is an intimate relationship between two people and engage each other emotionally.

The frequency and intensity of single mothers in communicating with children play an important role in creating attitudes and behaviors of openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitude and equality. Frequency refers to how often communication occurs between mother and child or vice versa in one day while intensity is the length of communication that occurs between a single mother and child or vice versa. For attitude and openness behavior, children are more open to tell their problems to her mother (single mother) without feeling shy or worried. Problems range from their subjects in the study to social problems, both in the school environment and home. Empathy is created between a child and a single mother, in which the child becomes aware of the condition of his mother (single mother) who must struggle with herself in earning a living and raising her children. Children do not demand or ask for unimportant things, such as expensive clothes, expensive bags or expensive shoes.

Source: Interview Results

Children are more concerned in living their lives. Supportiveness, positive attitude and equality occur alternately between single mother and child. They support each other in living their lives, acting and behaving positively for everything that befell them and share the same destiny. Communication between a single mother and child is always colored by effort to find common ground, especially when discussing about a problem, the child's problem or the mother's. Mothers are always able to give advice to their children, but sometimes children often give advice back to their mother in making a solution of the problem. Nevertheless, mothers are the ones who keep control of children's activities and behaviors, and at the same time, affection persists among them.

5. Conclusion
The study discusses the role of single parents in the success of their children. Research is carried out by in-depth interviews with single parents and their children regarding the elements of openness, empathy, supportiveness, positivity, equality between single parents and their children. By this in-depth interview, it is expected to found inhibiting factors that experienced by single parents in parenting pattern that they apply in nurturing their children. The final result expected is the discovery of the ideal pattern of single-parent roles for their children.

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